

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus for regulating the presentation of electronic media content to a consumer, said apparatus comprising:

an interface arrangement which receives media content comprising a plurality of segments, wherein each segment includes cost factor data associated therewith;

a controller which

examines said cost factor data,

attributes credit values to said plurality of segments based on said cost factor data, and maintains a credit balance associated with said consumer based on the attributed values, wherein said controller attributes a positive credit value to received media content construed as credit-bearing content and attributes a negative credit value to received media construed as debit-bearing content, and

is adapted to adjust the attributed credit value of the received media content based on said cost factor data and at least one additional predetermined criterion external to the received media content;

is adapted to use the balance in the account to determine the rules for future behavior of content presentation; ~~and~~

is adapted to be programmed with consumer demographic profile and preference information, wherein, based upon the demographic and preference information, a modulated credit value for credit-bearing content is obtained; and

a regulator which applies rules for presenting the media content based on the credit balance.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein:

said controller is adapted to attribute a credit rating associated with said consumer; and

said regulator is adapted to control the presentation of received media content based on the attributed credit rating.

4. (Original) The apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the credit rating represents a threshold value and said regulator is adapted to cease the presentation of debit-bearing content upon the threshold value being breached.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said controller is adapted to:

monitor the presentation of received media content at the presentation medium; and

adjust the credit balance based on the presentation of received media content at the presentation medium.

7. **(Original)** The apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said controller is adapted to subtract from the credit balance upon debit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium and add to the credit balance upon credit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium.

8. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein:

the received media content includes pre-recorded media content; and

said regulator comprises a decoder for decoding the pre-recorded media content, as to permit the presentation of the content, based on the credit balance.

9. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one additional predetermined criterion external to the received media content comprises a time-dependent factor, wherein said time-dependent factor decreases a debit value of the received media content upon passage of time.

10. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation medium is a television; and

wherein the modulated credit value has a higher credit value when the credit bearing content is being presented to a consumer who is known to be in a demographic group that has a high probability of purchasing a product featured in said credit bearing content.

11. **(Currently Amended)** The apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein the received media content comprising a plurality of segments comprises a television commercial and at least a portion of a television show; and

wherein said consumer demographic profile and preference information includes consumer buying habits.

12. **(Original)** The apparatus according to Claim 10, wherein said controller comprises a set-top cable TV converter box.

13. **(Original)** The apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation medium is a computer monitor.

14. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus according to Claim 13, wherein the received media content includes internet multimedia content.

15. **(Currently Amended)** A method of regulating electronic media content to a consumer, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving media content comprising a plurality of segments, wherein each segment includes cost factor data associated therewith;

examining said cost factor data;

attributing credit values to said plurality of segments based on said cost factor data, wherein a positive credit value is attributed to received media content construed as credit-bearing content and a negative credit value is attributed to received media content construed as debit-bearing content;

adjusting the attributed credit value of the media content based on said cost factor data and at least one additional predetermined criterion external to the received media content;

maintaining a credit balance associated with said consumer based on the attributed values;

using the balance in the account to determine the rules for future behavior of content presentation; ~~and~~

obtaining a modulated credit value for credit-bearing content based upon consumer demographic and preference information; and

applying rules for presenting the media content based on the credit balance.

16. **(Cancelled)**

17. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to Claim 15, further comprising the steps of:

attributing a credit rating associated with said consumer; and

said regulating step comprising the step of controlling the presentation of received media content based on the attributed credit rating.

18. **(Original)** The method according to Claim 17, wherein the credit rating represents a threshold value and said controlling step comprises ceasing the presentation of debit-bearing content upon the threshold value being breached.

19. **(Cancelled)**

20. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to Claim 15, further comprising the steps of:

monitoring the presentation of received media content at the presentation medium; and

adjusting the credit balance based on the presentation of received media content at the presentation medium.

21. **(Original)** The method according to Claim 20, further comprising the steps of subtracting from the credit balance upon debit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium and adding to the credit balance upon credit-bearing content being presented at the presentation medium.

22. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to Claim 20, wherein:

the received media content includes pre-recorded media content; and

said method further comprises the step of decoding the pre-recorded media content, as to permit the presentation of the content, based on the credit balance.

23. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to Claim 20 wherein said at least one additional predetermined criterion external to the received media content comprises a time-dependent factor, wherein said time-dependent factor decreases a debit value of the received media content upon passage of time.

24. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to Claim 15, wherein the presentation medium is a television; and

wherein the modulated credit value has a higher credit value when the credit bearing content is being presented to a consumer who is known to be in a demographic group that has a high probability of purchasing a product featured in said credit bearing content.

25. **(Currently Amended)** The method according to Claim 24, wherein the received media content comprising a plurality of segments comprises a television commercial and at least a portion of a television show; and

wherein said consumer demographic profile and preference information includes consumer buying habits.

26. **(Previously Presented)** The method according to Claim 15, wherein the presentation medium is a computer monitor.

27. **(Original)** The method according to Claim 26, wherein the received media input includes internet multimedia content.

28. **(Currently Amended)** A program storage device readable by machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by the machine to perform method steps regulating the presentation of electronic media content to a consumer, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving media content comprising a plurality of segments, wherein each segment includes cost factor data associated therewith;

examining said cost factor data;

attributing credit values to said plurality of segments based on said cost factor data, wherein a positive credit value is attributed to received media content construed as credit-bearing content and a negative credit value is attributed to received media content construed as debit-bearing content;

adjusting the attributed credit value of the media content based on said cost factor data and at least one additional predetermined criterion external to the received media content;

maintaining a credit balance associated with said consumer based on the attributed values;

using the balance in the account to determine the rules for future behavior of content presentation; ~~and~~

obtaining a modulated credit value for credit-bearing content based upon consumer demographic and preference information; and

applying rules for presenting the media content based on the credit balance.